The Ten-Minute Trainer

150 Ways to Teach It Quick and Make It Stick!

Sharon L. Bowman

Foreword by Dave Meier

Pfeiffer
A Wiley Imprint
www.pfeiffer.com

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About This Book

Why is this topic important?

Sound bites. Tag lines. Slogans. One-liners. The thirty-second spot. The sixty-second take. Small chunks of information dished up in short snippets of time. In television-dominated cultures, learners are used to this mode of information delivery: short and quick. Lengthy lectures are out. Short information chunks are in. Keeping this trend in mind, and using what we know about learning that sticks, those of us who are involved in the business of educating others need to design and deliver classes and programs that use shorter segments of time more effectively. We need to create learning experiences that are built on two fundamental learning principles of the twenty-first century: *shorter segments of instruction are better than longer ones, and learners remember more when they are involved in the learning.* Educating others becomes more effective, and less costly, when trainers use their time—and their learner's time—more efficiently. Involving learners before, during, and after short segments of instruction is also the basis of brain-compatible training, that is, teaching in ways that the human brain learns best.

What can you achieve with this book?

The Ten-Minute Trainer helps you make the most of your training time. This practical, grab-it-and-go book gives you 150 ways to use teachable moments—snippets of time in which you can reinforce the learning in powerful and memorable ways. This resource also gives you a simple and

practical blueprint, based on how the human brain naturally learns, for designing and delivering training quickly and effectively. You will discover the brain research that supports short, quick instructional methods, and new ways to motivate learners and increase their ability to remember and use what they learn. With *The Ten-Minute Trainer* as your guide, you will involve training participants in their own learning without sacrificing any training content. Best of all, you will be an expert at teaching a lot in a little time.

How is this book organized?

Because your reading time is precious, this book gives you the “how to” information first.

Part One contains 150 ways to use short segments of time to help learners review, remember, and apply important information. From the collection of “Got a Minute?” activities to the “Take Five!” games, these hands-on strategies increase learner motivation, interest, and involvement. They also help move learning into long-term memory. All the activities are from sixty seconds to ten minutes in length.

Part Two gives you the practical brain research upon which this book is based. It also explains two powerful instructional tools—the Learning Compass and the Training Map—to help you design and deliver training in less time and with better long-term results. Finally, Part Two shows you how to include the book’s concepts and activities in your own training by using five Power-Hour Training Templates.

Part Three offers you four “Get a CLUE!” elements to increase learner motivation and retention, “What’s a Picture Worth?” suggestions for making your training more image-rich, ways to check for understanding, and a unique training activity called “Station Rotation.”

You’ll also find a collection of Remarkable Resources to complement *The Ten-Minute Trainer.*

About Pfeiffer

Pfeiffer serves the professional development and hands-on resource needs of training and human resource practitioners and gives them products to do their jobs better. We deliver proven ideas and solutions from experts in HR development and HR management, and we offer effective and customizable tools to improve workplace performance. From novice to seasoned professional, Pfeiffer is the source you can trust to make yourself and your organization more successful.

Essential Knowledge Pfeiffer produces insightful, practical, and comprehensive materials on topics that matter the most to training and HR professionals. Our Essential Knowledge resources translate the expertise of seasoned professionals into practical, how-to guidance on critical workplace issues and problems. These resources are supported by case studies, worksheets, and job aids and are frequently supplemented with CD-ROMs, Web sites, and other means of making the content easier to read, understand, and use.

Essential Tools Pfeiffer's Essential Tools resources save time and expense by offering proven, ready-to-use materials —including exercises, activities, games, instruments, and assessments—for use during a training or team-learning event. These resources are frequently offered in looseleaf or CD-ROM format to facilitate copying and customization of the material.

Pfeiffer also recognizes the remarkable power of new technologies in expanding the reach and effectiveness of training. While e-hype has often created whizbang solutions in search of a problem, we are dedicated to bringing convenience and enhancements to proven training solutions. All our e-tools comply with rigorous functionality standards. The most appropriate technology wrapped around essential content yields the perfect solution for today's on-the-go trainers and human resource professionals.

Essential resources for training and HR professionals

The Ten-Minute Trainer

150 Ways to Teach It Quick and Make It Stick!

Sharon L. Bowman
Foreword by Dave Meier

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A Wiley Imprint
www.pfeiffer.com

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Published by Pfeiffer

A Wiley Imprint
989 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103-1741 www.pfeiffer.com

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ISBN-13 978-0-7879-7442-8 ISBN-10 0-7879-7442-0
Acquiring Editor: Martin Delahoussaye

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Illustrations: Mary Gillot

Printing

To Mom:

“You played a well game, girl,”
and you would have been so proud
of this “real” book.

And to all the eager readers
who grab a handful of sixty-second ideas
and create unforgettable learning experiences
from quick snippets of time.

Foreword

What the Trainer's Trainer Says About

The Ten-Minute Trainer

In this bright and zesty book, Sharon Bowman reminds us again of the basic fact of all learning: it is only what the *learner* creates that is learned.

Boy, do we ever need to hear this—repeatedly. We in the training field often get hung up by the belief that it is the *instructor's* presentation that determines the quality of learning. And so we continue to rely on things such as the interminable PowerPoint® lecture as the centerpiece of our training programs.

But PowerPoint, overused, is nothing more than electronic chloroform. It knocks people out. Instead, our job as training professionals is to wake people up. Yes, *wake people up*—to their full potential for learning, for job success, and for a life that embraces the full mind, body, and spirit.

The Ten-Minute Trainer will certainly wake people up. It contains a gold mine of easy-to-use ideas for getting learners to talk, to think, to move, to create, to act—and thus to learn. And it contains a rapid design method for weaving these ideas together into effective learning programs.

Use this book as a resource. Refer to it often. Consult it when you're stuck. It will re-awaken you to what good learning really is—*a supreme act of creation on the part of the learner.*

The Ten-Minute Trainer is bound to make your job easier and more fun, and make you much more effective as a designer and facilitator of learning.

Count on it.

Dave Meier
Author of *The Accelerated Learning Handbook*
Director of the Center for Accelerated Learning
Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

Opening and Connections

What's in It for You?

Introducing You to *The Ten-Minute Trainer*

Quick Start

Mark-Up. Circle the answer to each question.

1. How long is the average length of a television drama, comedy, news, or documentary segment before a commercial break occurs?
    a. About 20 minutes.
    b. About 5 to 9 minutes.
    c. About 8 to 12 minutes.
    d. Not long enough.
2. How long are the commercial breaks between show segments?
    a. They feel like forever.
    b. Probably around 15 minutes.
    c. Closer to 8 minutes
    d. About 4 to 6 minutes.

Answers: If you circled 1C and 2D, congratulations. You probably watch a lot of television—or you are really good at estimating time. Either way, in this chapter you'll discover the connection between television and training, and why this connection is important to you.

It used to be that most face-to-face instruction was pretty much straight lecture, with learners listening (maybe taking some notes) and the subject matter expert doing all the talking.

Here's the truth about that type of teaching: it never really worked well to begin with and it still doesn't work well. Especially now, it needs to change because learners, as well as entire cultures, have changed how they take in information.

On the up side, most of us who have the job of educating others, and who are good at what we do, have already moved from lecture-based methods of instruction to more learner-friendly methods. We try to involve our learners in a variety of ways to increase interest, motivation, learning, and retention.

On the down side, it takes time—and lots of it—to continuously think of new ways to keep training participants motivated, interested, and involved. While we struggle with this dilemma, our learners have totally different learning expectations than folks did fifty years ago. And the biggest change in how people learn today, according to many researchers, stems from—you guessed it—television.

How TV Changed You and Me

"What has television got to do with face-to-face instruction?" you ask. The answer is simple. Television has

- *Conditioned* us to expect fast-paced, attention-getting methods of information delivery.
- *Reduced* the length of time that we pay attention by delivering information and entertainment in shorter and shorter segments of time.

- *Reawakened* us to the power of the image to teach, entertain, convince, and make a message memorable.

These changes aren't bad or good; they just are. As trainers, we can rail against them, rally for them, or simply understand and use them to create learning experiences that work better for our learners.

The changes in how people take in information have occurred in the world's cultures that are television-saturated, that is, where the majority of people watch two hours or more of programming every day. In the United States, that number is now approaching four hours.

Why Ten Minutes?

When we pay attention to what goes on in those two to four hours of television viewing, an interesting pattern of timing emerges. According to the American Association of

Advertising Agencies and the Association of National Advertisers, Americans watch about forty minutes of programming and twenty minutes of commercials an hour. This means that in a fifteen-minute viewing segment, we see about ten minutes of an actual program and about five minutes of commercials. Variations to these numbers depend upon the broadcasting station itself, the changing federal and state regulations, the time of the day or evening, and the type of program. These numbers also differ depending upon the country and culture. Around the world, each country has its own regulatory laws concerning commercial break times, but the overall pattern is the same everywhere: *most television-dominated cultures are moving toward shorter program times and longer commercial break times.*

Those of us who help others learn need to take these changes into account when designing and delivering training. If we don't, we will lose many learners along the way, or learners will need remediation later because they will have forgotten most of what they heard. This does not mean that we need to dumb down our training. It does mean that we need to change our methods of instruction to meet the television-conditioned learning needs and shorter attention spans of our audiences. More specifically, it means that we should break up our information delivery into shorter lecture segments while increasing learner involvement throughout the training.

Take a Break

Time It. You don't have to take the advertising association's word for it. Run a quick test yourself. The next time you sit down to watch a major

broadcasting station’s prime-time programs, have a stopwatch handy.Time the program segments over a one-hour period. Also time the commercial breaks over that same period. Get an average of each. Jot down your numbers here:

The Brain Gain

One worthwhile outcome of television viewing is that it demonstrates the power and potential of an image-rich medium of learning. In that respect, it is very compatible with how the human brain really learns. The brain can absorb visual information at a much faster rate than verbal information. Television does just that: it delivers images in rapid-fire sequences, sending a lot of information to the brain in the medium the brain processes best—images. In contrast, traditional instruction, with its emphasis on lecture and listening, is a brain drain—numbing the neurons and damaging the dendrites with boredom, tediousness, and deadly dull learning.

In addition to being an image-rich medium, television is also brain-compatible in that it keeps the mind engaged by using a variety of constantly changing sounds and images. This sensory stimulation activates the part of the brain that responds to changing stimuli in order to stay awake and alert.

The connection between how television delivers its messages and how we, as trainers, deliver ours is clear. In order to create brain-compatible learning experiences, we need to include more imagery and change in our training. We must supplement our words with pictures, photos, cartoons, drawings, doodles, metaphors, analogies, stories, symbols, icons, and so forth. We should include three-dimensional imagery as well, such as physical movement, spatial activities, improvisation, and games that get the learner's whole body involved in the learning. We need to change more things during training: instructional strategies, presentation methods, room environment, learner involvement, and sensory stimuli. In other words, we must design and deliver training in ways that television viewers expect and that the human brain loves: *with short*

informational segments followed by quick breaks, and all of it packaged in high-energy, fast-paced, image-rich ways.

Who Needs to Know?

If you give information to other people and you want them to learn it, remember it, and use it in some fashion, *The Ten-Minute Trainer* is written for you. It doesn't matter what you call yourself—teacher, trainer, instructor, educator, facilitator, human resource specialist, performance improvement technologist—it's the work you do that counts. *And your work is educating others so that they can become better at what they do or so that their lives improve because of what they learned.* Whether you are new to teaching and training or an experienced pro, your work is important, and this timely resource will help you do it even more successfully.

New Trainers. Read Part One first. Choose one or two activities to include in your scripted training. Simply slip them in where a natural break in informationdelivery seems to occur. When you become comfortable with these activities, choose one or two more. Observe which ones work best for you, your learners, and the topics you teach. Keep these as part of your standard training delivery. Later, when you want more information about brain research and training design, read Part Two.

Experienced Trainers. Read Part Two first. Familiarize yourself with the brain research about effective learning and teaching. Use this information, and the activities in Part One, to fine-tune what you already do well. Substitute new activities for ones you always use but that don't excite you anymore. Experiment with the two design tools—the Learning Compass and the Training Map—and combine them with what you already know about effective training design.

Busy Trainers. Read this resource like a newspaper. Skim the Contents for chapter titles that interest you. Read those chapters first. Or use the book as a back-pocket resource when you want a quick activity and have only a short time to find one. Skip to what you need or want. Save the rest for later.

Twelve Benefits You'll Get from This Book

The Ten-Minute Trainer is based on two fundamental training principles of the twenty-first century: *shorter segments of instruction are better than longer ones, and learners remember more when they are involved in the learning.* With these concepts in mind and this book as your guide, you will be able to

1. *Choose from 140 "Got a Minute?" activities* to include in your lectures so that your learners review, repeat, and remember important information (Part One).
2. *Use ten short "Take Five!" games* to RAP up the learning—reinforce, apply, and practice—so that learning is moved into long-term memory (Part One).
3. *Soak up ordinarily wasted instructional minutes* with thirty Time Sponges such as Quick Starts, Take a Break, and Early to Finish activities (Part One).
4. *Experiment with quick, high-energy ways* to involve your learners without sacrificing content (Part One).
5. *Apply two powerful instructional tools*—the Learning Compass and the Training Map—to shorten your training design and delivery time (Part Two).
6. *Use five Power-Hour Training Templates*, with any topic, any size group, and any age learner (Part Two).

7. *Organize your lecture time* so that your learners get the most from your instruction (Part Two).
8. *Understand the brain research* behind the concepts in *The Ten-Minute Trainer* (Part Two).
9. *Include four "Get a CLUE!" elements* to increase motivation and memory (Part Three).
10. *Make your training more image-rich*—by using graphics, cartoons, doodles, and more (Part Three).
11. *Change your concept of training time* as you use small but mighty seconds and minutes in creative, interesting, and memorable ways (Parts One, Two, and Three).
12. *Become a more time-efficient training professional* and be able to explain the what, why, and how of it all to your training colleagues (Parts One, Two, and Three).

Take a Break

Mark-Up. Skim the list of benefits you'll get from this book and circle the three that, for you, are the most important. Use this list as a preassessment of what you want to get out of the book. Now label those three A, B, C in order of importance. If you're short on time, skip ahead to the parts of the book that contain that information and read them first.

It's Organized to Save You Time

Most busy trainers seldom have enough time to sit down and read a training book cover to cover. Often, they will flip quickly through books to find one or two activities that are easy to combine with what they already have planned to do. If this describes you, turn to Part One, which gives you the "how to" information first. Later, when you have more reading time, you can turn to Part Two, where you'll find the practical research upon which the book is based. In Part Three you'll find a number of other useful tools to increase learners' motivation and memory.

Part One Contains . . .

- "Got a Minute?" Activities to Help Learners Review, Repeat, and Remember. Each of these 140 activities lasts about sixty seconds and involves learners in a variety of hands-on, upbeat, thought-provoking ways. All you have to do is to sprinkle your training with a few of these activities, including them where they seem to fit best or where you want a quick review before moving on to new information.
- "Take Five!" Games That Help Learners RAP It Up: Reinforce, Apply, and Practice. The ten games and activities are from five to ten minutes in length. Some

are collaborative and some are competitive. You can use them with most topics and most audiences. Include them as openings, as closings, or when you want a longer review break between informational pieces.

Part Two Includes . . .

- "Attention Maker, Attention Breaker": The Recticular Activating System and Learning. You'll discover what attracts the attention of the human brain, for how long, and what you as a trainer can do to increase motivation, interest, and retention.
- "Three Brains in One": The Triune Brain and Learning. You'll find out why connections are so crucial to a successful learning experience, and how to create a safe learning community whatever the training topic or duration.
- "Let the Compass Be Your Guide": The Learning Compass and Learning the Natural Way. This instructional tool shows you how humans naturally learn and gives you four learning phases to guide you, as represented by the compass points.
- "Mapping Your Message": Making It Stick with the Training Map. Together with the Learning Compass, this training tool forms the easy-to-use blueprint that will enable you to design and deliver training in less time and with better long-term results.
- "Power-Hour Training Templates": Time-Saving Design and Delivery Tools. These five templates are easy-to-use instructional design tools that will save you time by combining your content with the ideas and activities from this book. The templates are excellent examples of how to use the Learning Compass and the Training Map. They also show you how to include the "Got a Minute?" and "Take Five!" training activities.